

# Iron County Register

BY ELI D. AKE.

IRONTON, MISSOURI

## VIA SOLITARIA.

[An unpublished poem, by Henry W. Long-fellow.]

Alone I walk the people's city,  
Where each seems happy with his own;  
I find not for my pity—  
I walk alone.

No more for me you lake-reveries,  
Though moved by loving birds of June,  
O birds! your sweet and piping voices  
Are out of tune.

In vain for me the elm-tree arches  
He plumes in many a feathery spray;  
In vain the evening-story matches  
And snuff the day.

In vain your beauty, summer flowers;  
You cannot greet these cold eyes here;  
They gaze on other fields than yours—  
On fields of care.

The gold is rilled from the coffee,  
The blade is rusted from the sheath;  
Life has but one more boon to offer,  
And that is—Death.

Yet well I know the voice of duty,  
And, therefore, life and health must crave,  
To give the world its best—  
In its grave.

I live, O lost one! for the living  
Who drew their earliest life from thee,  
And wait until, with glad thanksgiving,  
I shall be free.

For life to me is a station,  
Wherein I stand as a traveler stands—  
One brief hour from the dawn of nation,  
In other lands.

And I, as he who stands and listens,  
Amid the twilight's chill and gloom,  
To hear, approaching in the distance,  
A train for home.

For death shall bring another mating,  
Beyond the shadows of the tomb;  
On yonder shore a bride is waiting  
For the bridegroom.

In yonder field are children playing,  
And there—O vision of delight!  
I see the child and mother straying  
In robes of white.

Then, then, the longing heart that breaketh,  
Stealing the treasure only one,  
I'll call thee blessed when thou maketh  
The parting—One.

Sept. 18, 1883.

Now that our best and sweetest poet has  
left us, sending his farewell to the  
city—his last home and feeling—  
it may not be unkind to publish, what  
would have been a sad and lonely  
thing, but for the public eye,  
but simply to give utterance to his heart-  
-sorrow after the death of his wife, in  
1861. It was sent to me by a friend in  
some years ago, after my own great affliction,  
and has, therefore, a double sacredness to  
all who have passed through a similar sorrow.  
It will be read by many with a feeling  
when they remember how long and patiently  
with what brave and uncomplaining heart,  
he has waited at the "station" till now, at  
last, "the parting" has made "one."—H. M.  
Goodwin, in N. Y. Independent.

## THE CONVICT'S CHILD.

A True and Deeply-Affecting Story.

It was early morning.

"Is this the way, sir, to Sing Sing?"

"Yes," roughly replied a broad-faced

countryman, and passed on.

It was a fine day. The child was

somewhat fragile in her appearance.

Her bonnet was of broken straw, her

shoes were much torn; the sun played

hotly on her forehead. She walked on

and on an hour longer.

"Is this the way to Sing Sing, sir?"

"Yes, little girl, but what are you

going there for?"

The child trudged on, her lips quiver-

ing, but not deigning to answer the

pleasant-faced old man who had stopped

the jogging of his horse to note her

hurried manner, and who liked that lit-

tle face, anxious and sad as its expres-

sion was.

The dew was fallen. Katie had fal-

len, too, almost. A rough stone by the

way, imbedded in moss, received her

tired little frame. She looked so worn

and tired, sitting there, her tangled hair

falling on her hands that were clasped

over her face. By the shaking of her

frame the tears were coming, too, and

she was bravely trying to hold them

back.

"Why, what is the dear little girl

doing here?" The exclamation came

from a pair of young lips.

"A curiosity, I declare!" exclaimed

a harsher voice, and Katie, looking up

suddenly, covered away from the sight

of the young lady and her agreeable

looking companion.

"Whatever are you doing here, little

girl?" asked Nell Maywood, moving a

little nearer toward the frightened child.

"Going, Miss, to Sing Sing," said

Katie.

"Why, George! this child is going to

Sing Sing—ten miles off. Child, did

you know it was so far off?"

Katie shook her head, and wiped away

the hot and heavy tears, one by one.

"Why, you little goose, what are you

going to Sing Sing for? Have you had

your supper?"

Katie shook her head.

"Have you had any dinner?"

Again the child shook her head.

"No breakfast. Why, George, the

poor thing must be starved!"

"I should think so," mechanically

replied her brother, just recovering

from a yawn, and showing signs of

sympathy.

"Look here, what's your name?"

Well, girl, you must come up to the

house and get something to eat. Follow

me, and we'll take care of you to-

she can't be more than ten, if that. I

saw her out here sitting on a moss rock,

the most forlorn object. She says she

is going to Sing Sing."

"I met her on my way," said the

pleasant-faced old man, "she asked me

about it and I would have stopped her,

but she trudged on. Where is she? It

was noon when I saw her."

"In the kitchen, papa. Susan is

taking good care of her, I think, and

when she has had a hearty supper we

will talk with her."

A gay trio of young girls came in.

The nettles were put up, the gas was

burning brightly, and music and mirth

banished all thoughts of care. Suddenly

Nell Maywood remembered the odd

little figure, and clapping her hands,

cried, "O, I've something to show you,

girls!" and disappeared.

Susan was picking gooseberries near

the pantry in the kitchen.

"Where is the child, Susie!" asked

Nell Maywood.

"On the doorstep, Miss."

"Why, no, Susan, there's nobody to

be seen."

"No! Miss." Susan placed her pan

down, held her apron up to catch the

stems of the berries and walked delib-

erately to the door.

"Why, she sat there sometime after

supper. I turned and came in; she was

sitting there, looking up, at the stars,

I expect. I thought she was a mighty

quiet child, but she's deep, deep, Miss

Nell; she's gone. Let me see, there

ain't any silver around—I should be

afraid she'd took something; they're

mighty artful."

"Why, didn't you tell her she might

stay all night?" Nell Maywood was

peeping here and there, to spy her if

possible.

"Yes, Miss Nell, and told her what a

good bed there was over the woodshed;

but she looked strange out of them large

eyes of hers."

"The poor child is in trouble," said

Nell, quite sorrowful that she could not

further relieve her necessities. "I'd

have given her something to wear, and

we could have sent her to Sing Sing;

and perhaps she will come back again—

if so, will you send her to me?"

"If she do I will, miss," answered

Susan, going to the gooseberries again.

But little Kate did not come back.

She had been watching her opportunity

to get off, and had already been gone

some time. She slept in an open field;

crawled in some hay; she would have

walked all night if she had dared, but

she was afraid of the darkness.

"Mr. Warden, there's a queer case

over at my house," said a bluff-looking

fellow, meeting the Warden of Sing

Sing prison. "We found her last night

in some out-of-the-way place, and no-

thing would do but my wife must take

her in. We can't find out her name, except

that it is Kate, and I expect that she

wants to see somebody in prison. But

where she's come from or anything

about it."

"Bring her over here," said the War-

den—"my wife is wanting a little girl

for help; may be she's just the one."

So Kate stood, trembling more than

ever, in a few moments, in the presence

of the Warden and jailer. Kate was a

pretty child. Her large blue eyes were

in expression of intense melancholy;

her hair had been nicely combed and

curled, and some one had put a good

pair of shoes on her feet.

"Well, my little girl," said the War-

den, kindly—for he was prepossessed

in her favor—"where have you come

from?"

"New York," said the child, faintly.

The men looked at each other incred-

ulously.

"Do you mean to say that you have

come to Sing Sing from New York on

foot?"

"Yes, sir," said the child, frightened

at the manner, which had in it some-

thing of severity.

"And what have you come for?"

"To see my father." The child burst

forth with one great sob, and for a

moment her little frame was shaken with

a tempest of feeling.

sounded so sweet, so childish, in that

terrible prison. But as the scowling

face came close to the bars, the child

hid her head quickly in the jailer's arm,

half sobbing; it wasn't him.

"We'll try the next one."

He walked further, and spoke more

pleasantly this time:

"Well, Bondy, here is little Kate;

don't you want to see her?"

"Little Kate—there was a long

pause. "I had a Kate once—not a little

Katie; I broke her heart—God pity me!

Go on, it can't be for me."

Again the sweet voice rang out:

"Father."

The prisoner came up close to the

bars; a youthful face, framed with light

wavy hair—a face in which the blue eyes

looked innocent—a face that seemed

a sin to couple with a foul deed, gazed

out. It was a child's earnest, pleading,

tearful eyes; a dark expression rolled

like a wave across his brow; a groan

came up from his bosom, and with a

low moan he staggered against his bed,

crying:

"Take her away; I can't stand the

sight of anything pure like that."

Katie had hidden her face a second

time as she feebly cried, "I didn't him,"

so they kept on to the third cell.

"Jim, here's a little girl—little Katie,

your daughter—wants to see you."

A stupid "what!" came from the

bed; the man had probably just awak-

ened.

"Your little daughter."

There was a sound of rattling irons

that made the girl shiver. Dimly ap-

peared the face and outlines of a well-

made man—the countenance handsome

but evil. He seemed not to comprehend.

But as fast as the chains would permit

him, he came forward and looked out

at the anxious face below.

With a loud, convulsive cry she ex-

claimed, "Father! father!" and fell

nearly senseless against the jailer.

"Katie!" exclaimed the man, and

there was a nervous twitching about the

muscles of the mouth; "Whatever has

brought her here?"

The jailer was calling the child to con-

sciousness.

"Shall we let her come in the cell?"

asked the warden.

Jim was dashing his hand across his

face. A smothered "Yes," issued from

his lips. They opened the ponderous

door and put the child within. Her

arms were outstretched, his were wide

open, and they came together with a

clanking sound—together about the form

of that poor little child.

"Oh, Katie, Katie!" and then there

was a quiet crying. By-and-by the man

lifted the little head, whose glossy curls

were falling on his shoulder—and on!

what a sharp rattle of chains smote on

the ear—and looked in her face. After

a moment's irresolution he kissed her,

and then his eyes fell under her earnest,

loving look.

"Katie, what made you come?"

"I wanted to see you, father," and the

head was on his shoulder again.

"How did you come, Katie? Never

mind the noise, they are locking up;

they will be here again and let you out.

How did you come, Katie?"

"I walked here."

"From New York, child?"

"Yes, father."

There was no sound, save that of the

chains, as he strained her closer to his

bosom.

"And how did you leave—her, Katie

—your mother?"

The question was asked fearfully, but

not responded to. He gazed eagerly in

the child's face; her little lip was quiv-

ering.

"Katie, tell me quick!"

"She died, father!"

A groan—a terrible groan—followed;

the man's head fell in the lap of his

child, and he wept with strong cries.

The jailer and the warden said that they

never saw a sight so woeful. And the

child tried to comfort him, till his

strength seemed to be gone and his sobs

were like gasps.

"O, Katie, when did she die?